

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 XMB-02 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00

OMB-01 IO-10 /092 W

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P 070830Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7109

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 0136

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JA, KS, KN

SUBJ: ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS

REF: SEOUL 8616

1. SUMMARY. WORKING LEVEL OF FONOFF CANNOT CONFIRM PRESS REPORTS THAT GOJ WILL ALTER POLICY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ROK AT EXPENSE OF DEVELOPING LIMITED LINKS WITH PYONG-YANG. AT SAME TIME BUREAUCRATS, WHO APPEAR UNCHARACTERISTICALLY OUT OF TOUCH WITH TOP LEVEL OF MINISTRY, CANNOT DISPEL IMPRESSION THAT GOJ ATTITUDE TOWARD SEOUL WARMING UP. FURTHER EVIDENCE IN FORM OF POLICY DECISIONS ON HARD ISSUES REQUIRED BEFORE FIRMER JUDGMENTS POSSIBLE, BUT OUTLOOK FOR IMPROVED ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS SEEMS SOMEWHAT BETTER NOW UNDER INFLUENCE OF LDP VICE PRESIDENT SHIINA, DEPUTY PREMIER FUKUDA AND FONMIN MIYAZAWA. END SUMMARY.

2. JAPANESE PRESS, MOST NOTABLY ASAHI, HAS BEEN REPORTING
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FONOFF AS SAYING THAT NEW FONMIN MIYAZAWA WILL CONCENTRATE

ON IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH ROK AT EXPENSE OF DEVELOPING TIES WITH PYONGYANG. AS INDICATION OF THIS TREND, REPORTS GO, FONOFF WILL NOT APPROVE NEW EXIM CREDITS TO PYONGYANG FOR TIME BEING, AT LEAST UNTIL MINISTERIAL MEETING IN SEOUL WHICH NOW SLATED FOR MAY. ASKED TO COMMENT, NEASIA DIVDIR SEO TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE HAD NOT HAD CHANCE TO BRIEF MIYAZAWA IN ANY DEPTH ON KOREAN RELATIONS, AND STILL HAD NO FIRM FEEL FOR THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER'S BASIC PHILOSOPHY ON THE ISSUE. SEO KNEW OF NO NEW POLICY DECISION ON EXIM CREDITS TO NORTH KOREA, AND WAS CHECKING TO ASCERTAIN SOURCE OF NEWS STORY. THERE HAD BEEN NO FORMAL PROPOSAL THAT MINISTERIAL MEETING BE HELD IN MAY, THOUGH MIYAZAWA HAD INFORMED AMBASSADOR KIM AT THEIR MEETING DECEMBER 27 THAT EARLIEST DAT GOJ MINISTER COULD BE FREE FOR MEETING WAS LATE MAY AFTER END OF DIET SESSION.

3. EXIM CREDITS

POLICY OF GOJ ON EXIM CREDITS, SEO CONTINUED, WAS TO HANDLE EACH CASE ON INDIVIDUAL BASIS BEARING IN MIND ALL RELEVANT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS. TO BEST HIS KNOWLEDGE POLICY HAD NOT CHANGED, NOR HAD A DECISION BEEN MADE TO WITHHOLD CREDITS FOR TIME BEING. MIYAZAWA, HAD, HOWEVER, TOLD AMBASSADOR KIM AT DECEMBER 27 MEETING THAT HE WAS "NOT ENTHUSIASTIC" ABOUT USING EXIM FUNDS FOR NORTH KOREA. SEO BELIEVED THAT EARLIER EXIM GRANTS FOR NORTH KOREAN TOWEL AND NUTS AND BOLTS PROJECTS HAD ALREADY BEEN PROCESSED AND WERE IRREVERSIBLE.

4. MIYAZAWA FOR "TILT" TOWARD ROK?

SINCE MIYAZAWA CAME TO POWER, NEASIA DIVISION HAS SENT HIM PAPERS ON INDIVIDUAL TOPICS AND PROVIDED SHORT ORAL BRIEFING IN PREPARATION FOR DIET APPEARANCE, BUT HAS HAD NO CHANCE FOR IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF PHILOSOPHY BEHIND ISSUES. HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE KOREAN QUESTION HAVE BEEN NOTABLY "CONSIDERATE AND DISCREET," SEO CONTINUED BUT HIS BASIC PRIVATE VIEWS REMAIN UNCLEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, DURING DECEMBER 27 MEETING MIYAZAWA TOLD AMBASSADOR KIM THAT HE REGARDED MINISTERIAL MEETING AS OPPORTUNITY FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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"FRESH START," AND HOPED ROK DID TOO. STATEMENT WAS NOT IN HIS BRIEFING PAPERS, AND SEO UNABLE YET TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER MIYAZAWA THINKING IN TERMS OF A POLICY INITIATIVE BEFORE OR RESULTING FROM CONFERENCE TO GIVE WEIGHT TO "FRESH START" IDEA, OR WHETHER HE SIMPLY DESCRIBING SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF MEETING. POLITE STATEMENTS ARE ONE THING, SEO CONTINUED, BUT MIYAZAWA'S APPROACH TO HANDLING THE TOUGH ISSUES OUTSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO GOVTS HAS

YET TO BE REVEALED.

5. TRADE PROBLEMS

FOR EXAMPLE, SEO CONTINUED, FOR PAST TWO MONTHS THE ROK HAVE BEEN ASKING THE GOJ NOT TO SELL SCUBA DIVING EQUIPMENT AND RADIO CONTROLLED GLIDERS TO THE NORTH KOREANS ON GROUNDS THAT THESE WILL BE USED IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE ROK. GOJ IS STUDYING WHICH OF ABOVE COME UNDER EXPORT LICENSE CONTROL, HAS NOT DECIDED WHAT ACTION, IF ANY IT WILL TAKE AND WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT IN ANY EVENT TO MANIPULATE FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES LAWAS GOVERNING COMMERICAL TRANSACTIONS. TO BE REALLY RESPONSIVE TO ROK, FONOFF WOULD HAVE TO WORK ON CHANGING LAW ITSELF.

6. CONTINENTIAL SHELF AGREEMENT

ANOTHER BASIC ISSUE WHICH WILL REQUIRE STRONG POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WILL BE CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT, SEO CONTINUED. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT MIYAZAWA PLANS TO CONSULT WITH THOSE ELEMENTS IN LDP OPPOSED TO AGREEMENT BEFORE SUBMITTING IT FORMALLY FOR APPROVAL WITHIN LDP OR DIET. IF HE SUCCEEDS IN GAINING CONSENSUS WITHIN LDP, AGREEMENT WILL BE PASSED WITHOUT MAJOR DIFFICULTY. IF THIS INITIAL OBSTACLE CANNOT BE OVERCOME AGREEMENT WILL PROBABLY NOT BE SUBMITTED FORMALLY AT ALL, SINCE TWO CONSECUTIVE FAILURES WOULD APPEAR TO DOOM FOR GOOD ANY THIRD ATTEMPT NEXT YEAR. IN ANY EVENT, BUREAUCRATS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GAIN CONSENSUS REQUIRED WITHIN PARTY. SEO AND OTHERS TRIED LAST YEAR AND SUFFERED TO NO AVAIL THROUGH TWO MONTHS OF BITTER HARANGUES. ONLY AT MIYAZAWA'S LEVEL AND ABOVE IS THERE A CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 0136

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. BUDGETARY SQUEEZE

SEO AND HIS DIVISION SUBMITTED PLAN FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR TO IMPROVE ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS THROUGH STEPPED UP CULTURAL EXCHANGE. THE PROPOSAL, WHICH INCLUDED A PROGRAM FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF GRADUATE CENTER AND TRAINING SCHEMES FOR BOTH SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS, WAS REJECTED OUT OF HAND FOR BUDGETARY REASONS.

8. COMMENT: SEO SEEMS OUT OF TOUCH WITH TOP LEVEL OF HIS MINISTRY AND APPEARS UNCOMFORTABLE IN THIS UNCHARACTERISTIC SITUATION. HIS REMARKS DID LITTLE TO REFUTE NEWS LEAKS OR TO COUNTER IMPRESSION THAT MIKI GOVT MAY FURTHER SOFTEN STANCE TOWARDS SEOUL. THE GOJ CAN EASILY HOLD OFF ON EXIM BANK CREDITS FOR PYONGYANG WITHOUT CHANGING BASIC POLICY OF CASE BY CASE CONSIDERATION. MIYAZAWA'S STATEMENTS MAY ONLY REPRESENT SURFACE POLITESSE, BUT THEY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO IMPROVE THE TONE OF ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS, WITHOUT STIRRING SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION IN JAPAN.
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THE APPARENT LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION WITHIN FONOFF AT THIS POINT APPEARS COINCIDES WITH INDICATIONS OF WARMING TREND IN GOJ APPROACH TOWARD SEOUL. IT IS WIDELY, IF NOT OPENLY BELIEVED IN BUREAUCRACY THAT KIMURA FAILED TO RETURN AS FOREIGN MINISTER IN PART BECAUSE PARTY VICE PRESIDENT SHIINA WAS FURIOUS AT THE WAY HE HANDLED THE KOREAN QUESTION (REQUIRING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SHIINA TO MAKE A HUMILIATING VISIT OF APOLOGY TO SEOUL). SHIINA, WHO WAS FOREIGN MINISTER WHEN ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS WERE NORMALIZED, HAS FAR MORE STATURE IN NEW GOVT THAN HE DID UNDER TANAKA. THE GENERAL PRO-ROK STANCE OF CONSERVATIVES LIKE DEPUTY PREMIER FUKUDA, AND LDP EXECUTIVE BOARD HEAD NADAO ARGUE FURTHERFOR A MORE EMPHASIS IN TOKYO ON IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH SEOUL. PRECIOUS LITTLE HAS BEEN SAID LATELY ABOUT KIM TAI-CHUNG AND OTHER ABRASIVE PROBLEMS. WHAT WE HAVE SEEN IN PRESS AT LEAST SUGGESTS THAT KIM CASE

LOSING ITS STING AND THAT GOJ MIGHT BE WILLING TO FINESSE
ISSUE.

THE EVIDENCE SO FAR IS TENUOUS, HOWEVER. LIKE SEO AND
OTHER WORKING LEVEL BUREAUCRATS, WE WILL WAIT TO ASCERTAIN
FROM POLICIES ADOPTED ON DIFFICULT ISSUES WHAT LIES BEHIND
CURRENT "CONSIDERATE AND DISCREET" FACADE OF GOJ POLICY
TOWARD ROK.
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